

GRAY LEAF SPOT OF ST. AUGUSTINE GRASS

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St. Augustine grass, *Stenotaphrum secundatum* (Walt.) Kuntz, is one of the most widely planted lawn grasses in Florida (3). It is popular because of its dark green color, its ability to tolerate salt spray, and its adaptability to a wide range of soil types and growing conditions.

Gray leaf spot, caused by the fungus *Piricularia grisea* (Cke.) Sacc., occurs frequently during the warm, humid, summer months. It may cause serious damage to St. Augustine grass if not controlled.

SYMPTOMS. Symptoms of the disease appear as round to oblong brown leaf spots with dark margins (Fig. 1). During warm, humid weather the fungus grows profusely, giving a gray appearance to the spots. In severe cases, leaves may wither and turn brown, giving an overall appearance of drought injury (1).

CONTROL. The severity of gray leaf spot is enhanced by the application of nitrogen fertilizer; consequently, this nutrient should not be used excessively. Watering should be regulated so that the grass remains wet for the shortest possible time.



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Fig. 1. Gray leaf spot of St. Augustine grass.

For control fungicides may be required. Any one of the following fungicides -Daconil 2787, Dyrene, Fore (Dithane M-45), or thiram applied at the rate of 4 oz in 10 gal of water per 1000 sq ft is effective. During rainy periods, repeated applications at 10 to 14 day intervals may be necessary (2).

Literature Cited

1. Freeman, T. E. 1969. Diseases of southern turf grasses. Univ. Fla. Agr. Exp. Sta. Bull. 713A. 31 p.
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3. Wilson, F. L. 1961. St. Augustine lawn grasses. Univ. Fla. Agr. Ext. Seru Circ. 217. 15 p.